

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Famous Artists Painting Course



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EL GRECO
View of Toledo
Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art



El Greco's *View of Toledo* is an unexcelled example of the transformation of outward appearance through the artist's inner vision and the unusual compositional scheme it dictated. Reversing the ordinary procedure, the foreground is painted in a low key with blurred strokes while vivid detail is reserved for the distance. Dramatically lighted skies were freely used by El Greco to express a mystically religious state of feeling.

You are an artist

It is being recognized more and more that all people are innately creative, and that the potentiality for artistic expression exists within each of us. Throughout the world, people are embracing creative experiences with an intensity never known before.

There are millions of people who appear to have little or no artistic talent; but these same people, given the proper training, sufficient leisure, and an atmosphere conducive to artistic effort, would produce pictures in varying degrees of quality and interest to surprise the most sophisticated viewer.

Aside from the absolute value of the work produced, the experience of creation is in itself invaluable. Self-expression is the basic characteristic of creative activity. Through self-expression the individual may clarify his relationship to his personal world. His experiences are unified and deepened, and their meanings are made uniquely his own. Artistic creation leads to greater emotional maturity and a new appreciation of human values. In addition, it provides the deep satisfaction that comes only with personal achievement.

It is our hope to assist you, through this Course, in realizing your latent creative talent. In these pages we will provide you with the fundamental knowledge you must have to make your personal statement in pictures and with paint. With this guidance, and through your study of the old and the modern masters of painting, you should soon acquire the painting skills needed to express your own unique viewpoint in pictures.

We believe in the contemporary experimental point of view in art, and in the right of every individual to express himself in terms most convincing and suited to him. At the same time, the standards of good taste established throughout the history of art are not to be discarded.

For these reasons we have leaned heavily, throughout this Course, on the established giants of modern painting, as well as on traditional masters, for a major portion of our illustrations. Included also are many examples of the more advanced forms of contemporary painting and the experimental work of some of the most highly respected artists of the day. While the quality of the pictures was of major importance in their selection, our principal concern was that each example should illustrate the point under discussion.

We are deeply indebted to the great museums, art galleries, private collectors, publishers, and individual artists through whose kindness and cooperation these fine pictures have been made available.

Some aesthetes may try to convince you that good craftsmanship is unnecessary to an artist whose aim in painting is self-expression. They may even caution you against submitting to a moderate amount of disciplined training, lest your individuality suffer irreparable damage. Some even will say that too much knowledge and skill will stifle your powers of self-expression.

With these arguments we do not agree. All the inspiration in the world will do you no good if you lack the knowledge you must have to translate emotions and experiences to the flat surface of a picture. Don't misunderstand us. We do not intend to impose laws upon you. Our purpose in teaching is to make available to you the basic knowledge and techniques of painting. Once you have studied and mastered these techniques, they will cease to be a conscious concern — and all your energies can then be devoted to purely creative thinking and artistic expression.

This Course was created for the amateur painter. It has been our guiding principle to make it of such quality and thoroughness that it can provide a complete art training for the student who wishes to achieve an advanced degree of accomplishment. At the same time, the student who wishes to enjoy painting primarily as a hobby can take as little or as much of the training and information as he desires.

An active interest in drawing and painting will enrich your life as few things can. You will develop a new awareness of everything around you. Nature will open up wonders which you hardly suspected were there; the whole world will take on added color and interest. Everyday objects you passed by casually before will suddenly have new and personal meaning. You will begin to view works of art with an understanding and judgment which were not yours before.

Drawing and painting present the solution for every idle hour. They provide a never-ending expedition of discovery into a bright new world, and open up a wonderful life of achievement and emotional satisfaction. Artists are never lonely people, for they have that most satisfying of all companions — self-expression.

Don't be timid about your painting. Those who know anything about art will have the highest regard and consideration for your efforts — and those who don't will have increased respect for your initiative and talent and they'll like your pictures. At least you will have taken a blank paper or canvas and created a picture on it which reflects something of yourself, your own personal expression and experience.

You and your Course

We created this Course to achieve just one goal — to teach you to paint pictures, to make it possible for you to become a part of the wonderful world of art.

Learning and teaching are a joint effort. We can teach you — but you must do the learning. What you get from your Course will depend on how much you give to it in dedication, energy, and, most of all, self-discipline. This matter of discipline will be your greatest challenge for the duration of this Course. If you can make good use of your time and effort, and if you have even a small amount of talent and intelligence, we can make you a fine craftsman. If you can further add to this a strong habit of observation and creative curiosity, you may then become a real artist in all that the word implies.

We will teach you the traditional principles of drawing and painting which artists have developed over the centuries and handed down to us. We believe deeply that these fundamental artistic truths and techniques are the basic language and architecture of all sound picture making. You must learn and respect them if you hope to produce art that carries conviction.

After you have mastered the principles of drawing, form, composition, painting techniques, and all the other aspects of your training, it is our sincere hope that you will use your knowledge and skill to investigate many contemporary and original approaches to your art. The most creative artists have always been those with open minds, an inquisitive attitude, and sensitivity to the constant changes going on in art — the new art forms and new ideas that are the vitality of contemporary picture making.

Your Course was planned, written, and illustrated, and is conducted by people who are acknowledged leaders in the art field today. Their work is reviewed constantly in all the current art magazines and is to be seen in leading museums and fine arts shows. These artists have proved that they know the why and the how of making good pictures.

It is our sincere conviction that the proper way to teach and study the art of making pictures is with pictures. Accordingly, we have followed the most modern methods of visual education in designing and writing the Course. There are thousands of clear, explanatory step-by-step photographs, diagrams, drawings, and paintings in your textbooks, so that you can quickly understand and absorb what the members of your Faculty are trying to teach you. The instructions are simple, direct, and always to the point — all the traditional ponderous clichés about art, all the irrelevant theories, have been left out.

This is the first time in the history of art teaching that such a course has been made available by such eminent teachers.

First things come first

Please remember that you did not learn to write words until you first learned to make and understand the letters of the alphabet, and you did not write a composition until you first knew what the words meant — only then could you arrange them to make understandable thoughts. Similarly, you cannot make good pictures until you have a solid grasp of the essentials of art.

First things come first. Remember that we who are teaching you know from many, many years of experience what is necessary for you to know before you can hope to become a successful artist. All the things we will teach you in this Course are absolutely necessary for you to master before you can become a well-rounded artist.

In every area of your training you will be given specific instructions and controlled exercises and assignments. However, at no time during the entire Course do we want you to feel that we are trying to control your creative or artistic talent. This must come from within yourself. We are simply trying to give you the guidance, the tools, the training, and the knowledge you will need to achieve your creative ends and produce fine pictures.

Our responsibility — and yours

In starting this Course with the Famous Artists Schools you have committed yourself as an art student to our care, teaching, and guidance. We feel very keenly this responsibility and we will do everything we can to help you to succeed in art.

All through your training you will receive sincere, individual attention from artist-instructors who are specialists in every phase of the work you do and send in for criticism. We will try in every way to make you feel that we are close to you as teachers — and that your art problems are ours. Criticisms and gradings will be given in a fair, direct, and honest manner. We will not attempt at any time to soften a criticism just because we do not wish to hurt your feelings. It would do you no good if we did not tell you the truth. If, in our letters to you, we may at times seem severe, it is only because we are trying to teach you — not coddle you. It is difficult to get the warmth of personal contact into a letter — but please believe that it is always there.

It would be quite simple and easy for us to constantly say, “Your work is good” — and save ourselves a lot of time and effort. And you would think, “What nice people they are.” We must all, however, be honest and realistic if we wish to advance.

We have taken on the responsibility of teaching you, and we expect you to do your full share of the learning. If your work deserves praise, we will certainly enjoy giving it to you.

There is no fuller life than that of the artist who — through his knowledge, training, and creative ability — produces, on blank paper or canvas, pictures for the world to admire and enjoy. But do not confuse yourself about being that artist now. It must take many, many long hours and months and years of hard work, guidance, and training.

Only you — the artist — can be responsible for your own success. We can teach and guide you in the right direction. We want to be your trusted friends and counselors, but please do not forget one thing above all — you and only you, with your own sincere self-discipline, dedication, and effort, can make yourself an artist. For, in the end, you will be your own best teacher.

Start to teach yourself now by learning to look at and see everything about you with a keen, observant eye. Make it a habit to visit art shows and picture galleries whenever you can. Thoughtfully examine the pictures in art magazines and books. Styles in art change constantly. By being alert and inquisitive and sensitive to these constant changes and new trends, you will always be creatively aware and up-to-date in regard to new directions and experiments in art. Every successful artist will tell you this same story. There is no other key that will open the door to your success as an artist.

How good is your School?

Every once in a while someone asks us, “How good is your School?” Our answer is usually the same: “As good as our students make us.” Perhaps this seems like a casual answer. It isn’t.

Let’s consider thoughtfully: What does make a good school? Fine teachers? Of course. A sound training program? Yes. Objectives of the highest character, and integrity toward its students? Very important. Yet how good are all these fine assets without students who take advantage of them?

A school can bring to a student the finest courses of learning and philosophies of teaching. It can place at his disposal the best teachers. But unless the student matches these advantages with an inquisitive mind, a willingness to learn, and the hard work and dedication that have always been a requisite for success in any field, neither the student nor the school benefits.

We have seen many swell-headed “geniuses” full of self-esteem — who took their talents for granted and felt no obligation to develop their gifts through study and investigation. These people make any school look bad. On the other hand, we know of countless people who, with just a modicum of talent — but a good deal of ambition, initiative, and capacity for hard work — have become highly successful artists. These are the people who make your School look good.

We can with pardonable pride remind you that your School is the best of its kind anywhere in the world. We have earned the respect and regard of leading art scholars and authorities throughout America and Western Europe. More than two hundred universities and residence art schools have placed at the disposal of their teachers and students alike the same textbooks you use. Virtually every major magazine, art journal, and newspaper have written editorially about your School — its distinguished Guiding Faculties, its teachers, its teaching methods, and its successful students.

In spite of all this, you will still get from your association with us no more and no less than you put into it. You, in the final assessment, will make your Famous Artists Schools a poor school or a good school — and yourself a mediocre or a good artist.

Pictures-what are they?

If you will just stop for a moment and look about you at the things in your room, the people around you, or the view out the window, you will realize that you live in a world which is made up of forms — forms which are solid or three-dimensional. They have height, width and thickness.

These objects which you see all around you are the same ones that you will want to put in your pictures.

If you were a sculptor, instead of a painter, it would be comparatively easy to take these solid objects and duplicate their form. You could do this by taking an object such as a building, measuring its height, width, and depth — then making a scale model out of clay, wood or stone by simply transferring the measurements in proper scale from the real building to your model.

However, as a painter you have a more difficult task. You cannot model the building out of clay or wood on your canvas because *the surface is flat*. Therefore, it is clear that you cannot *really* reproduce this solid form you decided to paint. You can only create the *illusion* of that solid form on your flat, two-dimensional surface.

Now, although all of this may seem quite obvious, it remains a fact that most people who approach painting for the first time fail to keep this simple truth in mind. They try to paint with their mind instead of their *eye* and put down what they *know* about the objects instead of what they *see*.

For example, if they are painting a landscape with a house in the far distance, they will put in many details such as the shingles, windows, sash, etc., that their *brain* tells them they must logically paint in. If only they would stop for a moment and realize that their *eye does not* see these details at that particular distance, they would have a good chance of painting a convincing and realistic picture.

If they actually put down what they *saw* they would probably need only two small brush strokes — a single dark stroke to correspond with the shape of the roof and a lighter stroke beneath it to represent the shape of the side of the house. This is because that is all that would be visible at that distance.

You must realize that creating a realistic illusion of what you see before you depends just as much on leaving *out* what you don't *see* as in putting in what you do see.

The camera is perfect proof that a picture of *how an object looks* depends on *what is seen*, not *what is known*. The camera has no brain and hence no knowledge of what it sees. It is nothing but an accurate perceiving eye and it works just like our own.

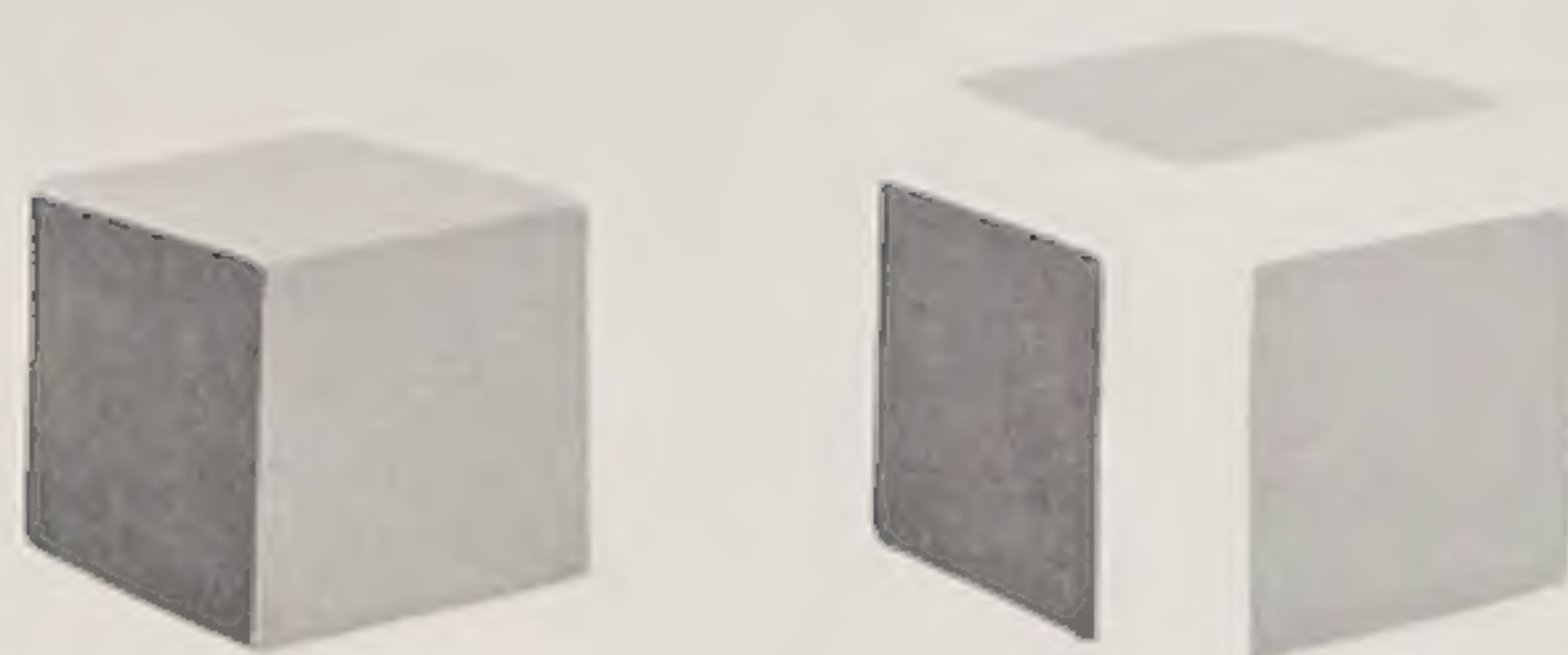
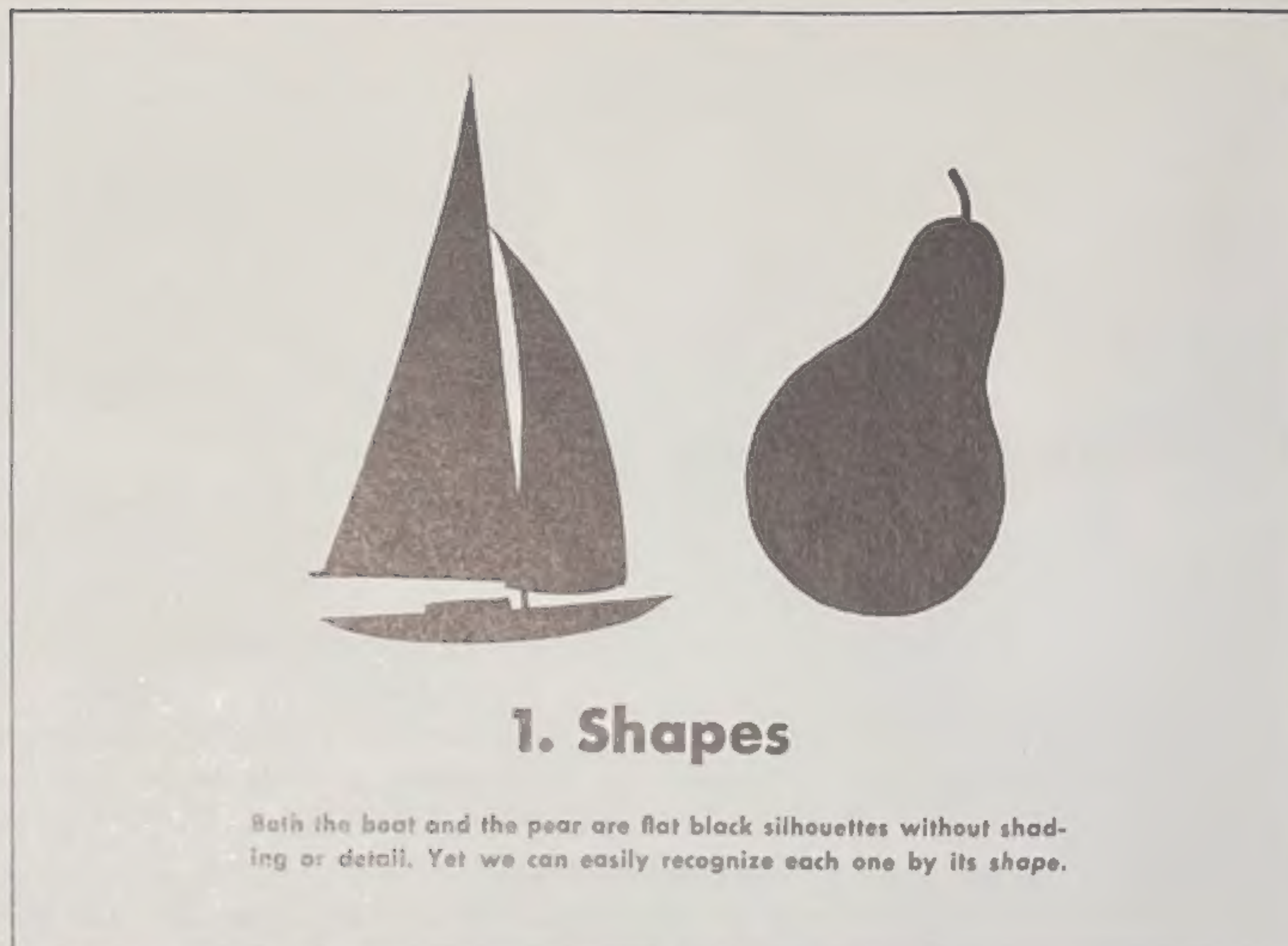
It is important for you to understand that the main job of the artist is *seeing*. There is nothing else that the painter does that counts so much. The delicate, sensitive touch of the brush and mixing of unusual color mean absolutely nothing without an intense interest in *seeing* and understanding the appearance of everything about him.

Your eye sees only three things

On the following pages you will learn that there are three things which our eyes see whenever they are open. It is these three things which we look for in the objects around us and which we transfer to our paper or canvas whenever we make a picture. We can transfer these elements to our paintings and we can check them quite carefully since all three are measurable to a certain useful extent. These three elements we shall call 1) shapes, 2) values, and 3) edges.

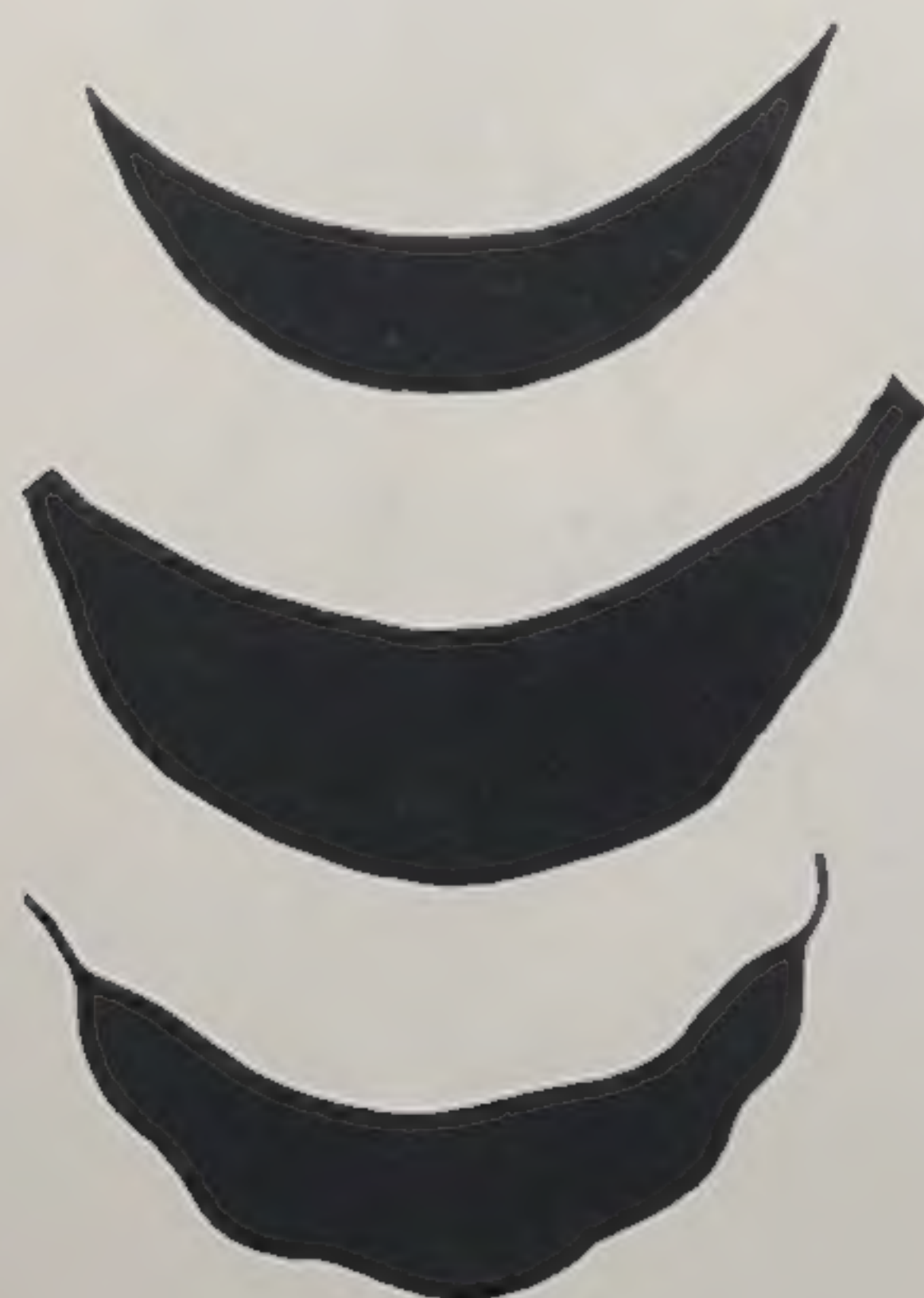
In this section we will often use the word *value* in place of the word *color*. Value is the part of color you see when pictures are reproduced in black and white. The other dimensions of color — hue and intensity — are fully discussed in the section on color.





This picture of a solid cube form is a simple direct example of the way in which we see forms as shapes. To the right, we have separated the shapes which make up the three visible sides of the cube, the top and two side planes.

From Ewing Galloway, N. Y.



The most important element in seeing and recognizing any object is its shape. The shape is important because although all the objects that we see are three-dimensional, this three-dimensional quality, as we have explained, cannot be put down on canvas or paper except in the form of a flat shape. The shape is our eye's interpretation of the form.

Everything has a shape. The simplest shapes to recognize are silhouettes of the whole objects, such as the pear and the sailboat. Each of these objects is clearly recognizable, despite the fact that they contain no natural color, shading, pattern or texture. We distinguish between the two of them simply by their over-all *shape*.

Almost as easy to recognize as the over-all shape of the object are the shapes *within it*. For example, we can recognize shapes of light and shadow on an object. Actually, these shapes are the most useful ones to the artist in creating the illusion of form or reality on the flat surface of his painting because they tell him most about the true form of the object. Shapes of light and shadow create the illusion of planes. These planes, in turn, create the illusion of form.

The picture of the cube clearly shows how the shapes within the object create the effect of seeing the front, side and top planes of the solid cube form. The picture of the man on the facing page also shows you how shapes of light and shadow create the illusion of a real figure.

← In addition to shapes of light and shadow we can also find shapes of pattern created by the difference in color on the object. The cow and zebra are good examples of these shapes occurring in natural forms. Wallpaper, linoleum and fabrics also contain shapes of flat pattern.

When we look at a mass of smoke or gas we see a shape — a shape with a very soft diffused edge, but nonetheless a shape. Always remember that regardless of how complicated an object appears, it can always be reduced to a series of shapes. Even the small branches of trees that we may think of as lines are long, thin shapes.

From all this you should realize the artist, in making a picture, is literally putting down shape after shape with his brush. His drawing is only as good as his accuracy in transferring the shapes that he sees to his canvas.

A skilled artist differs from the beginner chiefly in his awareness of shapes and the subtle differences that exist between them. Good drawing, in the final analysis, is a matter of being able to control the shapes.

In Section 6 we will show you how a thorough understanding of form will help you to make sure that the shapes you draw or paint are accurate.

← The silhouettes of the crescent, the banana and the pea pod show you the type of subtle differences in shape that your eye must see and your hand must control in order to draw accurately.

Obviously the same high standards for controlling the over-all shape of the object apply to your handling of the internal shapes — the proportions of the light and shadow areas as well as the shapes of flat pattern on the surface of an object.

Philip Gendreau, N. Y.



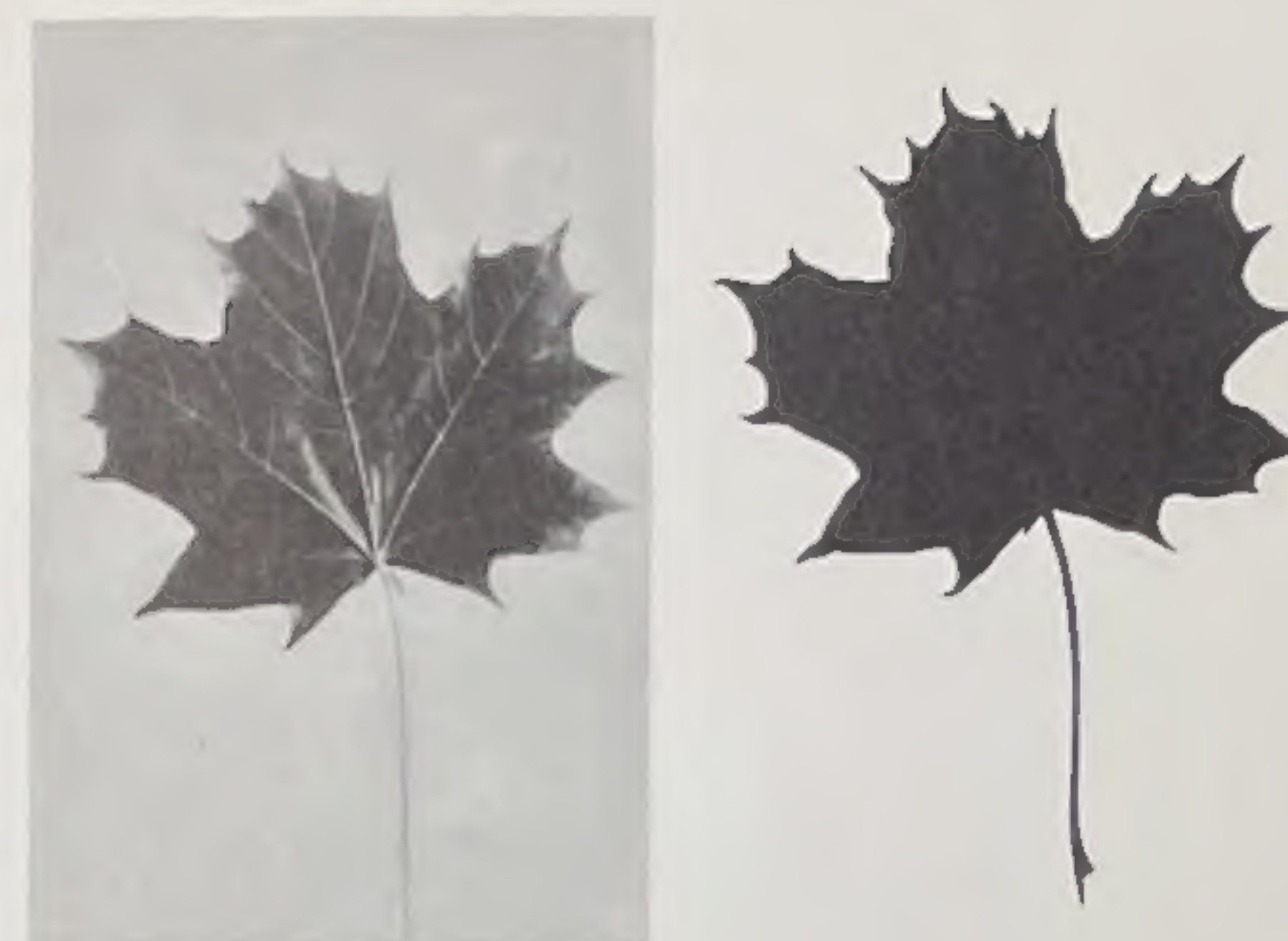
Here is a photograph of a tree and alongside of it the flat black silhouette made by simply tracing over the tree and filling in its shape with black ink. Because the shape is the same one that we see when looking at the real object, it creates a similar impression in our eyes. The shape tells us that it is a tree.

From Ewing Galloway, N. Y.



Whether we look at a single tree or many trees, we are looking at shapes. This time the shape changes as the tree instead of being isolated against the sky is crowded in with many other trees. We no longer see the single tree but a new shape of many trees making up the woods.

Philip Gendreau, N. Y.



Whether we are looking at a tree, a group of trees, or in this case a small part of one tree, we are still confronted with the inevitable shape, in this case the shape of the leaf. If we were to examine any part of the tree, the trunk, the limbs or smaller branches, we would still see shapes.

Philip Gendreau, N. Y.



This photograph of a figure, like the cube, is made up of shapes within the over-all shape or silhouette.

Here is the over-all shape of the figure similar to the pear, boat and tree that we saw earlier.

The shapes of light and shadow create the illusion of a solid figure form. Though lacking detail, these two shapes are the most important things we see in the photo.

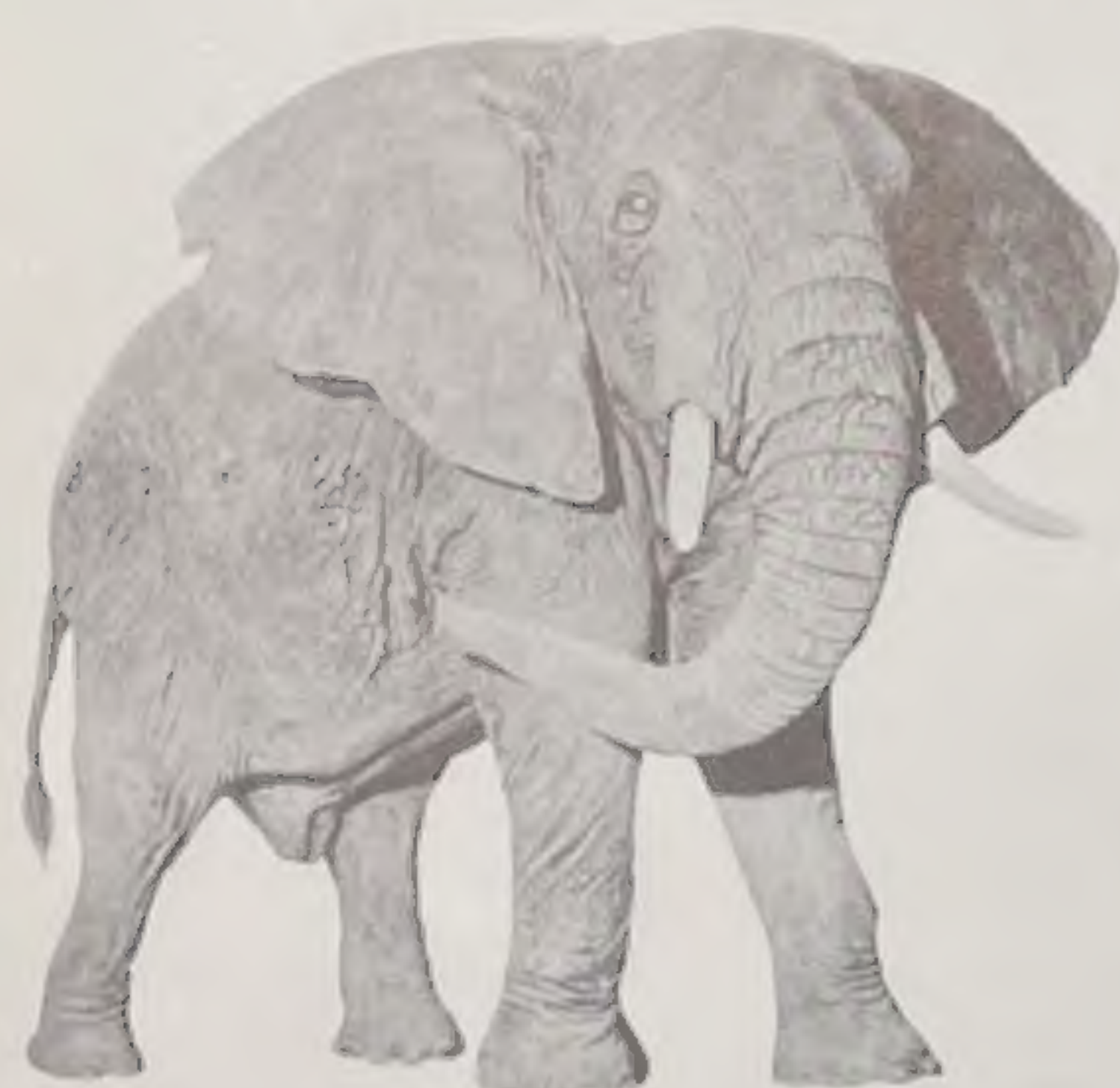
To make this explanation of shapes completely clear we have separated just the shape of light which strikes the front of the figure.

Here are the shapes of shadow.



We have pulled out of this photo just a few shapes to further demonstrate the part they play in seeing. The trees, the roofs and side walls of the building, the shadow cast by the silo on the ground — all these are shapes to our eye. Although we have pointed out just a few shapes, the whole picture could be analyzed in this same way.

Philip Gendreau, N. Y.



From Ewing Galloway, N. Y.



Philip Gendreau, N. Y.



2. Values

Here are two coffee pots of exactly the same size and shape. Neither contains shading or detail, yet we easily tell them apart because of their difference in value.

The second thing we must recognize to understand the process of seeing is *value*. *Value simply means the lightness or darkness of a shape.*

You have already seen that everything has a shape and now you must realize that everything also has a value. If you analyze two common objects, such as the coffee pots above, you quickly see that the only difference between them is value — one is light and one is dark. Both are the same shape and without identifying texture or color, yet we have no difficulty in telling them apart. For practical purposes, we can say that differences of light or dark are chiefly caused by two things:

First of all, by the natural color or pigment (called *local color*) of the object. The bottles of milk are examples of typically *light* objects. The elephant is a good example of the gray or middle value object and the frying pan is typically *dark*. The lightness or darkness of these objects comes from the pigment in the material of which they are made. Some objects, such as the zebra or the cow, have *both* light and dark shapes of local color.

The second element that influences the lightness or darkness of the shapes that we see is the *light* or *shadow* which falls on the object. A white shirt hung in a dark closet does not look as light as it would if we saw it next to a window. The demonstrations at the top of the opposite page show the effect of light on local color or value. The three strips of paper appear different in the light than they do in shadow.

The three pictures of the bowl containing the apple, banana and orange clearly show how the *local color* and the pattern of *light and shadow* combine to create the final effect that we see.

There is one other factor that determines the value of shapes. It is not as important as local color or light and shade, but it should be noted because knowledge of it is useful in landscape or seascape paintings. This factor is *atmosphere* or so-called aerial perspective. If we look out into the distance at a series of overlapping hills, we easily see that these hill shapes become lighter as they get farther away from our eye. This is because there is *atmosphere* between our eye and the subject. Fog or smoke has the same effect of changing values, but in a more obvious way.

Values are extremely important to the painter because they are the chief means by which he can show three-dimensional forms in his picture. One very practical trick in judging value relationships is to compare values through half-closed or squinted eyes. This is an accurate way to determine just how light or how dark a shape is.

You must remember, however, as you look at the objects around you, that our eyes see a much wider value range than we are able to duplicate with our paint. Here again we must make an *interpretation*. Actually, our white paint is many, many times darker than the sunlight that is reflected into our eyes off the shiny bumper of a car, just as our black paint will be much lighter than the darkness that we experience inside a closet. However, in actual painting practice we can satisfactorily use a more limited value range from white to black paint to represent this range of light or dark which we see. The important thing to keep in mind is the *relationship* of these values.



Place a piece of cardboard between the light and the strips to cast a shadow over part of each. All three strips are darker in the shadow. The relationship of values stays the same, that is, the shadow on the light strip is lighter than it is in the gray one which, in turn, is lighter than the shadow on the dark strip.

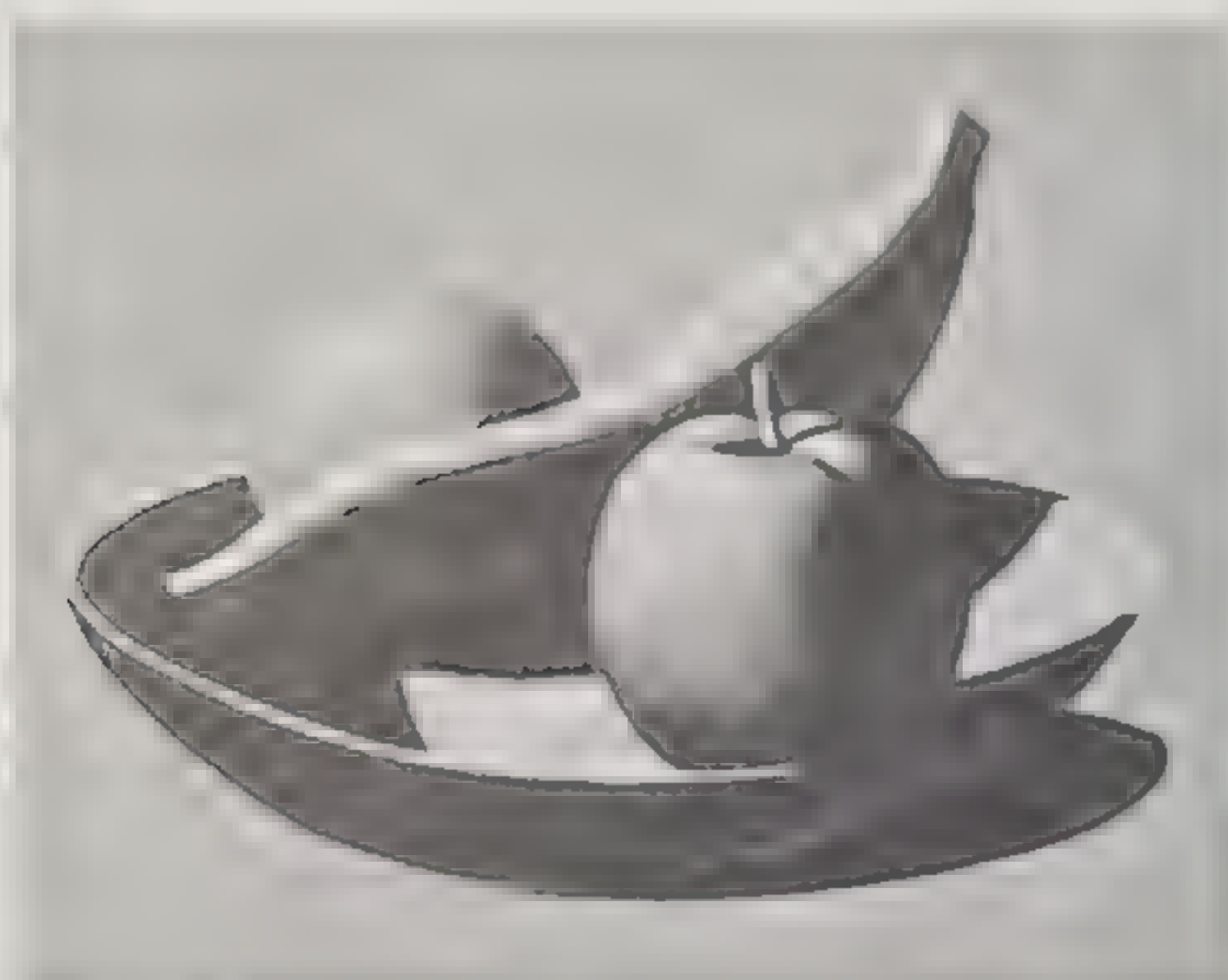
G. A. Douglas from Gendreau, N. Y.



This photograph is a good example of the principle demonstrated to the left.



Here is a diagram of the values caused by the pigment in the skin of the dark apple, the middle tone orange and the light banana. There is no consideration of light and shadow, only the local color.



This is a diagram of the lights and shadows on the pieces of fruit in the bowl. Everything is painted as if it were made of the same material. There is no consideration of local color — only light and shadow.



This is how the still life actually looks to us. You can see that what we are looking at is the combined effect of the other two diagrams.

Philip Gendreau, N. Y.

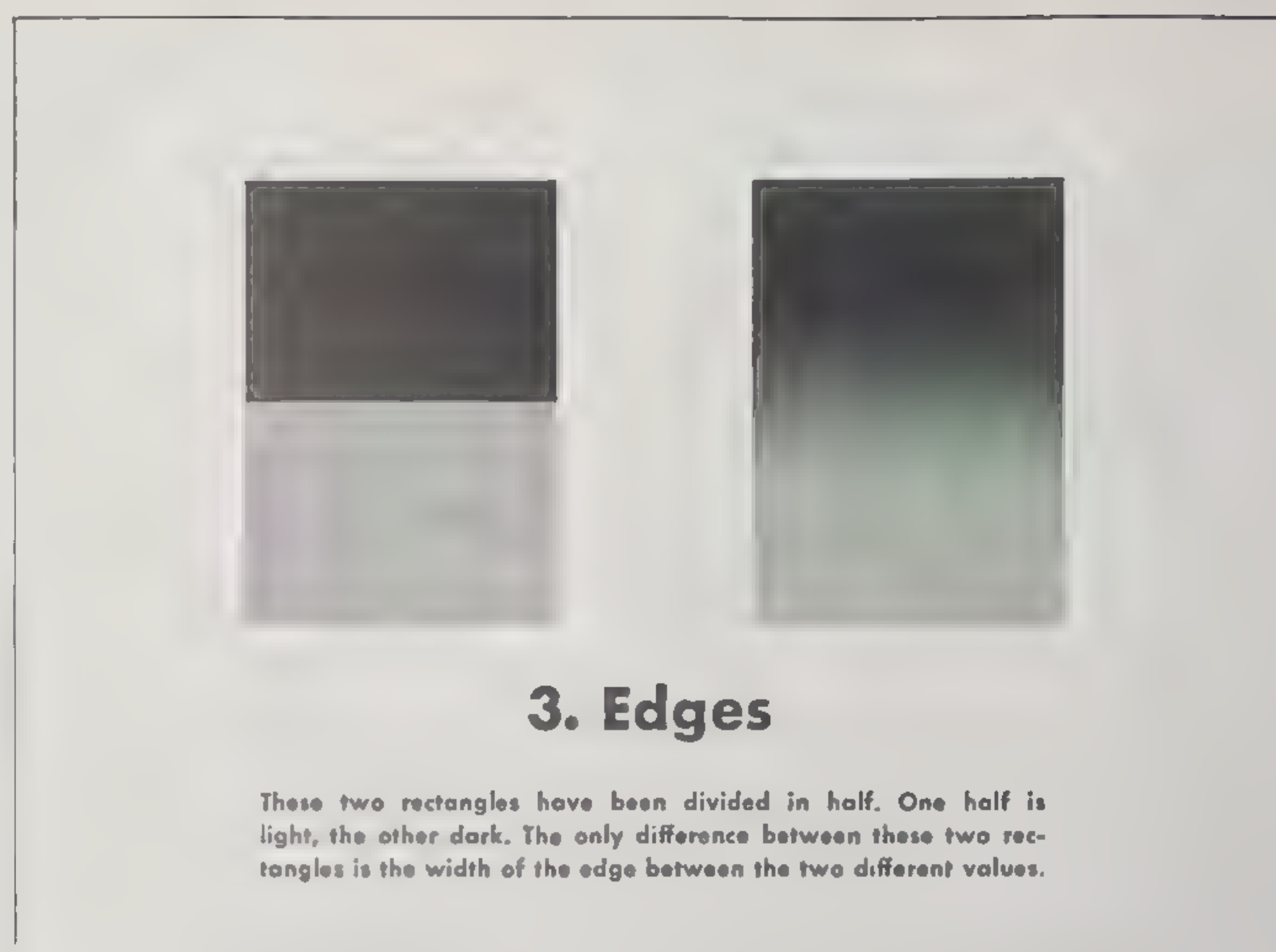
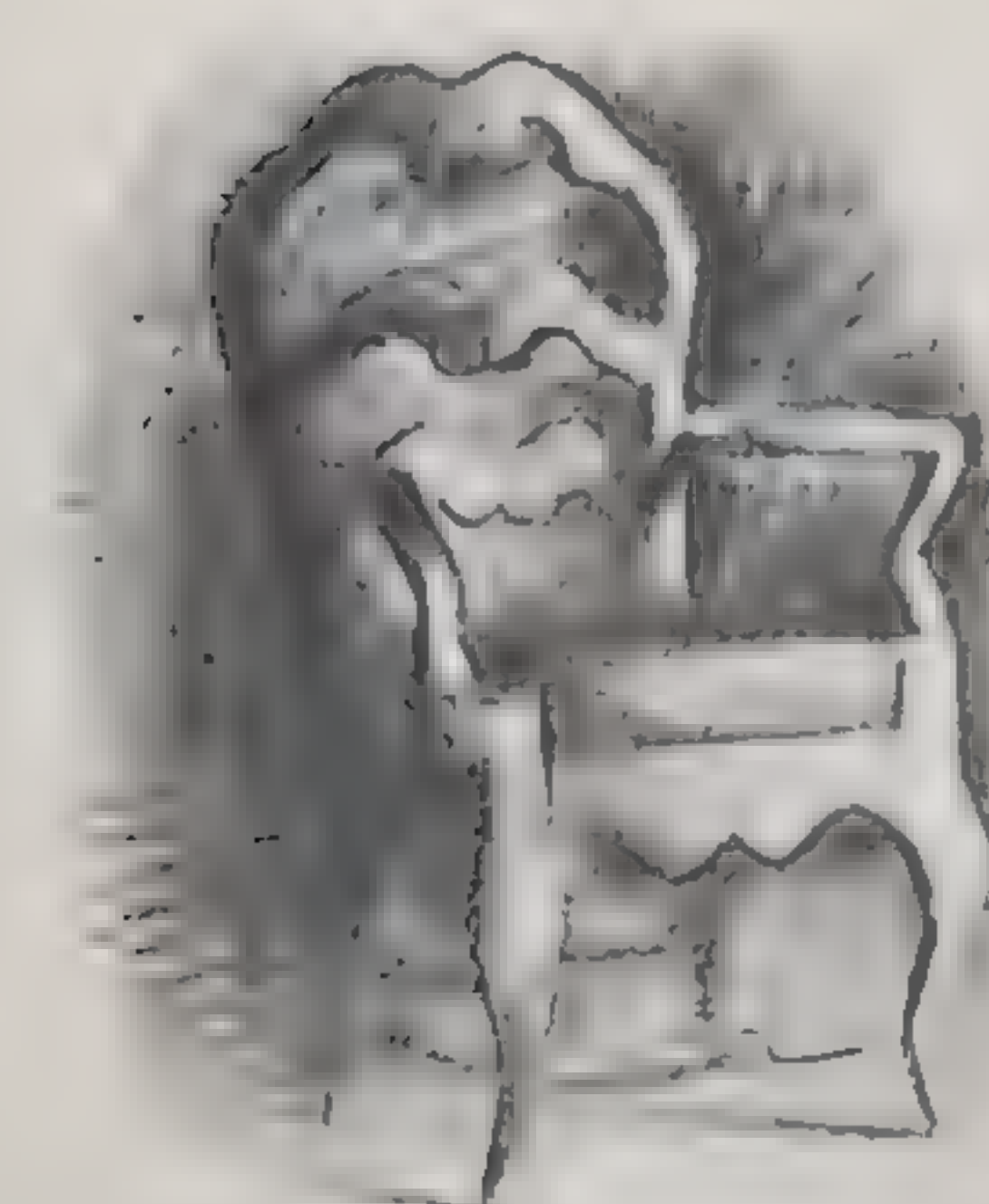


This photo contains a good wide range of values. As we learned from the three still-life pictures, these values are determined by both the local color and the light and shadow.



Here is a perfect example of the way in which atmosphere affects values. Notice that each overlapping mountain becomes lighter as it gets farther away from our eye.

This is a value chart, consisting of eight values ranging from white to black. It is a convenient way to measure values of light and dark. We have used it here to show you the values of some of the shapes in the photo. You should carry a sort of mental value chart like this around with you all the time and make constant comparisons of the values in everything you see.



We have seen shapes and values and we can easily recognize them in the objects around us. As you looked at these two factors, you have probably been aware of the presence of *edges* between shapes of different values.

This element of edge is the third and final thing to recognize in the process of seeing. Edges are simply the borders that we see between two shapes. They may be called blends, gradations, shading, etc. There is no real difference between any of these and for purposes of simplification we will refer to all of them as edges.

Edges can be either hard and sharp or soft and fuzzy. The chart on the opposite page shows you a series of different edges.

To the artist, one important reason for seeing different edges is that it enables him to paint form solidly and convincingly. The edges vary directly with the form. For example, the edge between the light and shadow planes of a cube or other angular form will appear very sharp, while the edge between the light and shadow sides of a cylinder or sphere will be soft and wide. (To see what we mean, compare the soft edges in the picture of the eggs with the hard edges of the church.) Moreover, on a smoothly curved surface like a sphere or cylinder there is a gradual transition between the light side and the side which is in shadow. This creates a definite area of halftone between the light and shadow which must be recognized and painted in if we are to reproduce the illusion of the real object on our canvas.

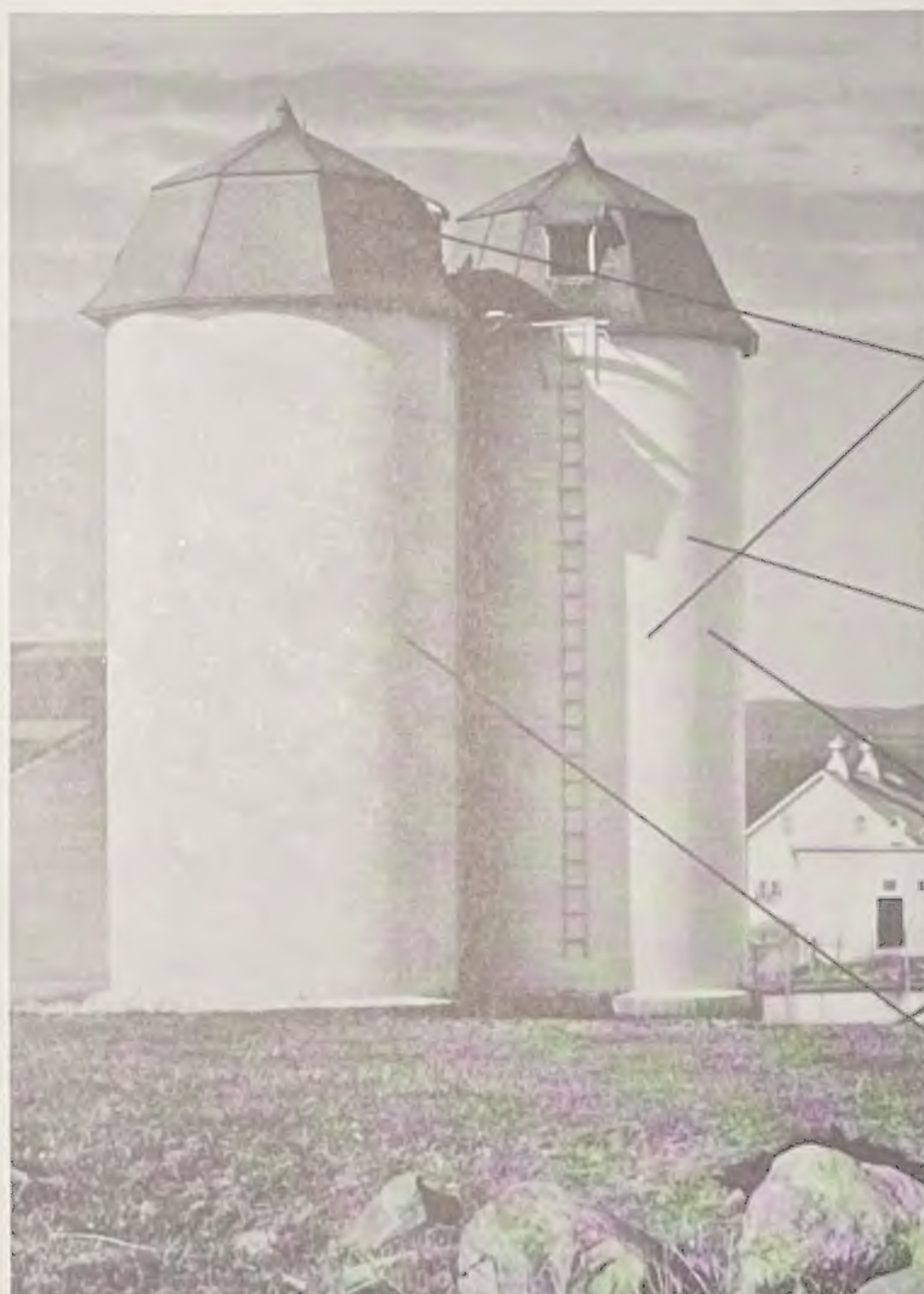
In cases where the *edges* between the light planes and the shadow planes are very wide and soft, they can be considered as separate areas or shapes. These are called *halftone* areas by the painter. The abrupt change of direction of the planes of the cube cuts off the light in a hard, sharp line and there is no halftone to be seen.

Ben Stahl takes full advantage of the various kinds of edges to enrich his drawings and paintings. Here he shows you very clearly that a drawing of a simple object like the chair need not look like something from a furniture catalog (drawing below), if you take advantage of the effects created by different edges. Notice in the drawing at the left how your eye is attracted to the front leg of the chair due to the sharpness of edge as well as contrast of value.

This combination of hard and soft edges creates the illusion of reality and it is these various edges which we must recognize, compare and then transfer to our canvas along with shapes and values to make an accurate reproduction of the things we see.

The element of atmosphere affects *edges* as well as values. As the distance between our eye and the object increases, the edges between shapes become softer.

By Ewing Galloway, N. Y.



On both silos the edge between the light and shadow side is soft and wide. Contrast these edges with the sharper ones between the planes on the roof of the silo and the cast shadow to the right of the ladder, and the hard edge of the left hand silo against the background sky.



Here is an edge chart which shows you the difference in width between the hard knife-like edge at the top and the extremely soft wide blend at the bottom. You can use this chart to measure the variety of edges that you see in the photographs on these pages.

J. W. McManigal from Gendreau, N. Y.



This head contains a wide variety of edges, ranging from the hard, sharp shadows cast over the front of the face by the cap, brow, nose and mouth to the soft, wide blends along the edge of the shadow on the chin and jaw. Whenever you are drawing or painting a head in tone you must be sure that the relationship between edges is the same on your paper or canvas as it is on those of the model that you see.



These three pictures summarize our process of seeing. First we see the simple shape of the whole pear; next we see that this over-all shape contains other shapes that have different values. Finally we recognize the edges between these shapes.



This picture, *Circus People*, by Ben Stahl shows how an artist, creating a picture, uses shapes, values and edges in an arbitrary, creative way. It is a particularly fine

example of one of the distinguishing characteristics of Stahl's work — the quality of the edges in his paintings.

Painters use shapes, values, edges

So far we have discussed the three elements of shape, value and edge as they relate to the process of *seeing*. We have used diagrams and photographs to explain each point and asked you to verify them for yourself by looking for shapes, values and edges in the objects which you see around you.

Now we want you to look at two paintings which clearly demonstrate two things. First, that the artist, just like the camera, works only with shapes, values and edges. Second, unlike the camera, he is not limited to record exactly what he sees before him, but *can and should change shapes, values and edges to suit himself*. This point is extremely important. You must understand it if you are to get full benefit from the course of instruction and full enjoyment from the many different types of pictures it contains.



Stahl's handling of this leg is typical of his use of both values and edges to bring out one part of a form (the thigh) and subdue another (the lower leg).



Edges The back of the man's arm has a soft wide edge that merges into the background. By contrast, the front edge of the arm is very sharp.



Values See how simply this figure can be reduced to three main values of light, dark and half tone.



Shapes The light planes on the seated figures of the man and woman create a definite shape.

JOSEPH DE MARTINI
Self Portrait
Courtesy of the artist



They create a portrait

This self-portrait clearly shows how shapes, values and edges have been used to create the illusion of a realistic head.



The Apron



The Hair



The Background



The Dark Side of the Face

Shapes The shapes, like the values, are simple and easy to pick out.



Values The basic value pattern in this picture is very simple. Note how closely these flat shapes of different value resemble the visual effect of the finished painting, despite the fact that they contain no detail or modeling.



Edges This close-up shows the sharp edge along the bridge of the nose, the wider edge along the brows and the still wider one between the light and shadow on the skull.



PAUL GAUGUIN
Tahitian Landscape
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Every artist has his unique way of seeing nature. For Paul Gauguin it was in terms of color, as this Tahitian Landscape demonstrates. In reference to a less exotic landscape he advised: "How does that tree look to you? Green? All right then, use green, the greenest green on your palette. And the shadow, a little bluish. Don't be afraid. Paint it as blue as you can." Gauguin knew that each color depends for its effect on the hues surrounding it in the picture. By raising to a high key of contrast the colors throughout his mountain scene, he managed to give vivid reality even to scarlet palm trees like these.